

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

20

Salem

BEV.
AO

BEV.1136 -
1141

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Photo 1: 24 and 26 Beckford St (L to R): View north

Town/City: Beverly

Place (*neighborhood or village*):
Gloucester Crossing

Name of Area: Beckford Street Area

Present Use: residential

Construction Dates or Period: 1885-93

Overall Condition: poor to good

Major Intrusions and Alterations:

Artificial siding, rear additions, replacement windows, porch modifications

Acreage: 0.9 acres

Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero and Pamela Hartford

Organization: Beverly Historic District Commission

Date (*month/year*): September 2016

Locus Map (north at top)



see continuation sheet

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

BEVERLY BECKFORD STREET AREA

Area Letter Form Nos.

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1136 - 1141

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

The Beckford Street Area is a distinctive enclave of late 19th century housing along the northwest side of Beckford Street, which runs between the main thoroughfares of Cabot Street to the north and Elliot Street to the south. Mill Street runs west from Beckford Street just to the north of the district. The topography slopes very gently down towards Elliott Street. Beckford Street is laid out as a boulevard, with one parking lane and a generous driving lane in each direction, separated by a wide median planted with grass and medium-sized trees. The northwest side of the street has a narrow planting strip with regular, medium-sized street trees and a concrete sidewalk. Granite curbs line the street edges.

The five residential buildings in the Beckford Street Area are 1 ½ stories in height with wood frame construction, front gable roofs, and picturesque massings of perpendicular ells, bay windows, and dormers. They were built as single family homes, in contrast to the later and larger two and three-decker housing that characterizes the opposite side of Beckford Street. All display typical elements of the Italianate style, including vertical proportions, side hall plans, gable returns and carved eave brackets, confident corner pilasters and fascia boards, angled bay windows on the facades, and decorative entrance porches. Colonial Revival influence is seen in pedimented dormers and a Palladian window. Foundations are random granite ashlar or brick; roofs are clad with fiberglass asphalt shingles. Windows are typically 1/1 double-hung replacement sash; 2/2 wood sash with band molded casings appear to have been the historic pattern.

The houses are set close to the street, typically with minimal side setbacks and relatively deep back yards. A narrow paved driveway typically extends along one side of each parcel; one possibly early garage stands at the back of 20 Beckford Street. Only one of the buildings still features clapboard siding; two have asbestos shingles, and one each has aluminum and vinyl siding. Other notable alterations include additions and some new fenestration at the rear of the buildings, replacement of some porch posts and balusters, and loss of trim where artificial siding has been installed.

All five buildings were likely constructed in a short period of time, ca. 1884-93. The buildings retain integrity of form, setting, and character, and represent one of the earliest and most intact groupings of 19th century development in Gloucester Crossing, displaying individually stylish and remarkably harmonious designs.

Originally L-shaped, 26 Beckford Street (Photos 1 and 2) has a distinctive, wrap around porch with a hip roof and modern posts and balustrades. It is also notable for the prominent dentil band on its horizontal and raking fascia. The façade contains an angled bay and offset entrance on the first floor, two symmetrically placed windows on the second floor, and a very small window centered in the attic. The side wing has one window centered on each floor. A large addition on the rear has a gabled roof, heavy fascia board, and a tall, gabled wall dormer with gable returns.

24 Beckford Street (Photos 1 and 3) features a simple rectangular main block at the front, with a small angled bay window and 3-bay, hip roofed entry porch with eave brackets on the first floor; two windows centered in the half story; and a very small window at the attic level. Walls are trimmed with a high fascia board that has decoratively carved eaves brackets at the corners. The right (northeast) elevation features a long bay window with a hip roof at the first floor and two dormers at the half story, one with a pedimented gable roof and the other with a hip roof. The left (southwest) elevation has a pedimented gabled dormer towards the street and a long, shed-roofed wall dormer at the rear. A one-story extension with a gable roof is set on the southern end of the rear elevation, while a full two-story addition with a second story entrance projects from its northern end.

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22 Beckford Street (Photo 4) has a cruciform shape, with side wings set well back from the front gabled façade. The main entrance porch, occupying the corner to the south of the front block, has a hip roof, small enclosed vestibule at the inner end with a street-facing door, square posts supporting a spindle railing at the top, and delicately sawn brackets at the corners. Its wood railing and newel posts appear original or early. The symmetrical façade of the front block has an angled bay window at the first story and one window in the half story above. The left (southwest) side of the front block has a hip roofed wall dormer. The gable ends of the south and north wings of the house have one window bay centered on each floor; most of their fenestration has been altered. A two-story rear porch at the west corner of the building is accessed by a spiral staircase. The only house in the district on which wood clapboards are visible, 22 Beckford Street is trimmed with molded sill boards, corner boards, and fascia boards.

20 Beckford Street (Photo 5) exhibits the area's most elaborate embellishment, with paneled corner pilasters, carved eave brackets on its rectangular main block. An offset, slightly projecting pavilion rises full height, with an off-center doorway at the first floor and a multi-pane Palladian window in its half story. Other windows typically contain 2/2 double hung sash. A hip roofed entry porch shelters the first floor of the pavilion and connects to an offset angled bay window. The northeast elevation features two asymmetrical windows at the first floor and a pedimented gabled wall dormer at the half story. The southwest elevation has two pedimented gabled wall dormers at the half story. A large, low addition extends to the southwest on the first floor, flush with the main block, with a side gable roof. The addition's façade has a modern picture window unit and a secondary entrance featuring a modern doorway with sidelights, large semi-circular transom, and cross gable.

18 Beckford Street (Photo 6) has a T-shaped plan with an entrance porch in the corner to the south of the front block. The entrance porch has a shed roof, a small entrance vestibule with a street-facing door, square posts with curved sawn brackets, and a modern metal railing. The symmetrical façade of the front block has an angled bay window at the ground floor and a single window above. Each of the other elevations has one window bay centered on it; there are no dormers. A room-sized addition at the rear of the block rises one story to a gabled roof.

Largely intact but threatened by unsympathetic alterations, the Beckford Street Area is notable as a cohesive group of middle-class housing built within a single decade in the late 19th century.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.

The Beckford Street Area is a small enclave of middle-class housing built in Gloucester Crossing at the end of the 19th century, when farmland and small-scale industry still characterized the area. In 1903, the arrival of the United Shoe Machinery Corp. completely transformed the neighborhood with tracts of two- and three-family worker housing. The district occupies the point of a V-shaped area between the Eastern Railroad two blocks to the west, which was extended through Beverly in 1839, and the Gloucester Branch of the railroad, laid in 1847, which runs behind the eastern side of Beckford Street. Horse-drawn streetcar service was extended up Cabot Street through north Beverly and into Wenham in 1886 and replaced by electric trolleys in 1896, facilitating workers' commutes. The huge United Shoe Machinery Corp. factory complex lies adjacent to the west side of the Eastern Railroad. The Beckford Street Area is located approximately midway between Cabot and Elliott streets.

A gristmill was built near the present intersection of McKay and Elliott Streets in the mid 17th century, and Mill Street was laid out in 1657 as the route from the mill to the then meetinghouse. The grist mill survived until 1885. The 1852 map of Beverly shows Beckford Street laid out, without buildings, but the 1880 atlas depicts no buildings yet on this block of Beckford Street. The properties constituting the Beckford Street Area were part of a larger parcel of land-- bounded in part by Mill Street, Beckford Street, and the Eastern Railroad—that was placed in trust to the benefit of certain heirs of Jane E. Rantoul in 1871 (Essex South Deeds 842/173). That property was subdivided into house lots in 1885 ("Plan of the Rantoul Estate on Beckford Street Made by William J. Berry, Surveyor, July 1885", Essex South Deeds 1155/300.)

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The first known residents in this area, in 1893, were Horace L. Higgins, a shoemaker, who lived at 24 Beckford Street, and George E. Brocke, a "morocco dresser", at 18 Beckford. Several later residents are listed at different addresses nearby at that time (elsewhere on Beckford and on Elliott Street), including George W. Smith, a miller; George Clark, a farmer; and Frederick O. Cressy, a farmer and milk dealer.

The 1897 atlas shows a number of significant outbuildings at the back edges of the properties at 18, 20, and 22 Beckford Street, which survived at least through 1907. Occupants in 1897 included the Brock [sic] Heirs at 18 Beckford; F. O. Cressy at 20 Beckford; George Clark at 22 Beckford; F. L. Higgins at 24 Beckford; and George F. Smith at 26 Beckford. By 1908, residents included Frederick O. Cressy, milk dealer, and his wife Ella at 18 and 20 Beckford; George Clark, farmer, at 22 Beckford; and Harriet Torrey and her husband James A., a horseshoer and carriage maker who also did automobile work, at 26 Beckford.

The boulevard treatment of the streetscape appeared between 1907 and 1919. Outbuildings survived at 22 and 24 Beckford Street in 1919, but had disappeared at 18 and 20 Beckford. In 1925, houses in the Beckford Street Area were occupied by Howard P. Lefavour, a teacher at Huntington Avenue in Boston, and his wife Elizabeth C. (18 Beckford); Frederick O. Cressy, no occupation given, and his wife Ella W. (20 Beckford); W. Russell Lefavour, milkman, and his wife Elizabeth M. (22 Beckford); Howard R. Lefavour, a milk dealer, and his wife Rebecca O. (house and business at 24 Beckford); John M. Tillotson, a molder at United Shoe Machinery Corp., his wife Esther A., Mrs. Hannah M. Gagnon, widow of Alfred, and Francis Gagnon, a clerk (26 Beckford). Mrs. Gagnon ran a variety store next door at 28 Beckford Street, in a building that appeared between 1907 and 1919; Francis was a clerk in this shop.

In 1950, residents of the Beckford Street Area included John J. Carney, a special officer at United Shoe Machinery Corp., and his wife Mary G. (18 Beckford); Antonio Digiustino, no occupation given, his wife Doreen M., Anthony Terenzi, an employee at GE Co. in Lynn, and his wife Rita (20 Beckford); Lewis R. Bagnell, a machinist at United Shoe, and his wife Grace R. (22 Beckford); John J. Cauley, a leatherworker in Beverly, his wife Honora Agnes, Ann Cauley, a clerk on Cabot Street and William G. Cauley, serving in the U. S. Navy (24 Beckford); and Ralph E Morse, an employee at United Shoe, his wife Evelyn B., and Francis L. Gagnon, an employee at GE Co. in Lynn (26 Beckford).

In 1965, occupants of the district included Calvin Curtis, a tester at Western Electric Co., in North Andover, and his wife Thelma M. (18 Beckford); C. Rodgers Close, a high school teacher in Medford, and his wife Ruth F. (20 Beckford); Lewis R. Bagnell, retired, his wife Grace R., and Priscilla M. Bagnell, a medical secretary at Beverly Hospital (22 Beckford); Pasquale Scialdone, a machinist at Tri-Home Corp. in Salem, and his wife Lena M. (24 Beckford); and Ronald D. Madore, a technician at GE Co., his wife Carmen F., and Ralph E Morse, a truck driver for United Shoe, and his wife Evelyn B. (26 Beckford).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Beverly city directories, 1893 – 1965.

Hepler, Margaret. *Beverly; Historic Cultural Resources Survey, 1992-93; Final Report*. June 1993.

Historic maps and atlases: 1852 (H. F. Walling), 1872 (Beers), 1880 (G. M. Hopkins); 1884, 1897 and 1907 (George H. Walker), 1919 (Yaeger-Klinge)

Massachusetts Historical Commission. *Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Beverly*. 1986

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AREA DATA SHEET

MHC #	Parcel ID	Street Address	Historic Name	Date	Style
BEV.1136	20-26	18 Beckford St	George E. Brocke House	ca. 1884-93	Italianate
BEV.1137 BEV.1138	20-27	20 Beckford St	Frederick O. Cressy House garage	ca. 1884-93 mid to late 20 th c	Italianate Utilitarian
BEV.1139	20-28	22 Beckford St	George Clark House	ca. 1884-93	Italianate
BEV.1140	20-29	24 Beckford St	Horace L. Higgins House	ca. 1884-93	Italianate
BEV.1141	20-30	26 Beckford St	George F. Smith House	ca. 1884-93	Italianate

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 2: 26 Beckford Street: Southwest and southeast (façade) elevations



Photo 3: 24 Beckford Street: Southwest and southeast (façade) elevations

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 4: 22 Beckford Street: Southwest and southeast (façade) elevations



Photo 5: 20 Beckford Street: Northeast and southeast (façade) elevations



Photo 6: 18 Beckford Street: Northeast and southeast (façade) elevations



Photo 7: 24 and 26 Beckford Street (L to R): View northeast towards Cabot Street

